

# The Republican.

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No. 8, Vol. 11.] LONDON, Friday, Feb. 25, 1825. [PRICE 6d.

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TO GEORGE GARLAND, ESQUIRE,

*Of Stone, near Poole, High Sheriff for Dorset for the  
year 1824.*

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SIR,

Dorchester Gaol, February 18, 1825.

ON finishing the former letter on Mr. Richman's first sermon, I considered, that, I had shewn resentment enough, for his conduct in that sermon, and resolved to sermonize, to be sober, mild and serious, with you, in this letter, and account to you for much or all that wears the appearance of asperity in my public writings. In my private letters, or private conduct, there is nothing like asperity, unless, indeed, when I cannot avoid the contact of a bad man.

A circumstance has occurred, too, which has thrown me into a sermonizing and plaintive mood. Yesterday, I received the painful intelligence, of the death of my much valued and only daughter, Hypatia, born in this prison chamber, and not yet three years old. Her death, too is not without singularity. It is the result of that second fire in my house in Fleet Street London, which, I shall ever think, was a Christian-fire. In a cold damp morning of November last, this child was put out of bed, in her bed clothes, into the street, after having been nearly suffocated with smoke. The first effect was a cold and cough, which brought on a hooping cough and a general consumption of frame to death. Thus, if the Christians did not wholly succeed with their fire, they have succeeded in accomplishing the martyrdom of this second Hypatia. I lament the death of this child the more, because, I could not be near to assist her, and this is another matter to go down to the account of Christian Persecution. Had Eldon and Peel, those real representatives of all that is religiously foul and bigotted in this country, been satisfied with five years of imprisonment on my body, I might have saved this really sweet girl. When your pre-

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Printed and Published by R. Carlile, 84, Fleet Street.

decessor (Sturt) was last in my room, to do the biddings of these religious men, he said, as if authoritatively, that I should have been long ago released, if I had submitted. What he meant by submission I know not, nor did I ask him; but this I can say, that in this affair, for which I have been persecuted, I will submit to nothing but the fate of my little martyred Hypatia, or to the free discussion that shall shew me to be in error and *not* an advocate of truth, morality, and all those great interests that promote, those great preliminaries to, the increased and general happiness of mankind. I will submit to no person, to no circumstance, short of the one or the other of these points.

In both of these sermons, the Preacher has represented *Atheism*, or even any kind of opposition to the Christian Religion, to be *wickedness*. Indeed, he is not alone in this assertion; I say *assertion*; for, I doubt of its having been the conviction of his mind. It has been the general character of a religious man, of whatever religion, or whatever sect, to consider *dissent from his religious principles* and *wickedness* to be synonymous. It is the very principle of all religion to engender this feeling; for, every sincere man associates himself with the secret powers of nature, believes that *his* only can be the *true religion*, that all false religion is the work of the evil power in nature, and, all dissenters from him, the children of a devil. This is, of necessity, the general principle of religion, call it *natural*, or call it *revealed*, and this fact is an all convincing proof, that religion, in any shape, cannot be good. The whole system of error, the whole system of vice, the origin of evil, centers in a personification of, in a giving intelligence to, that which is not in truth, in fact, in reality, personified and intelligent. It distorts the natural, the physical, the moral view of man, or by whatever other title human perception can be designated, and turns him from the only path to his happiness. If *heaven* be a figure to express *happiness*, true it is, that the road to it is one, narrow and difficult; and broad is the way to unhappiness; for, every way that you turn from this one narrow and difficult road of truth and happiness, you turn into the broad-way of error, unhappiness and destruction. Looking at the New Testament, the Gospels, the story of Jesus Christ, to be allegorical, which it can now be proved to be, as matter of fact and historically, I begin to see much to admire in it; though, as deeply as ever do I lament the error that has been founded upon the illiterately and uncouthly formed allegory of *Reason, of the Logos*, persecuted



by *Force and Strength*. I lament the misconceptions which ignorance has formed and fastened on it.

This general imputation of wickedness, on the part of every particular religion, is much heightened, has more bad effect, when it is associated with property and power. The possession of a property, that has been accumulated for the purpose of supporting a particular religion, gives an additional bitterness of feeling to the possessor of that property, towards all who dissent from him, towards all, who, he supposes, would willingly dispossess him of that property. Hence, religious rancour; hence all the existing rancour between Catholics and Protestants; and hence, the circumstance arises, that the dissenting, the persecuted, the least powerful party, has always the best of the argument, calls for more discussion than the party in possession of power and property likes, and argues, and discusses, and suffers in vain, until numbers and physical force turn the scale. This is the state of the religious world: this has been the state of man, wherever he has associated himself with religion, with the error of personifying those powers, the effects of which, and not the the causes, he can alone see. Could he trace every effect to its operating cause, he would have no religion: and thus it is, that, *religion begins only where knowledge ends, that, a man shakes off religion as he increases his knowledge.*

If we take *Jesus Christ* to be, what the words were first intended to indicate, to allegorize, an emblem of *truth, of reason, of morality, of purity of character*, introducing itself to an ignorant, bigotted, religious world, how beautifully does your Christian Gospel substantiate my argument. It is really the most grand, the most important, allegory, that was ever presented to the study of mankind. Men of former ages spake by parable, by allegory, by fable; because a tyranny existed which they feared; and men have continued to do this to the present time. Take the mass of public writers or public speakers, of this day, you will find then, writing or talking by parable, by allegory, by fable, meaning one thing while they say another; and why is all this? because, a tyranny exists which they fear; because, there is a property associated with a power, that reigns not for the good of all or for the majority. The principles of mankind, in all ages, and in all countries, have been the same, they have varied only in language, in costume and in customs. Correct principles, the best for the greatest number, can only be brought into existence and power by the representative system of

government, by the system, that represents, in all cases, in its government, the will of the majority governed.

Jesus Christ, your Logos, your emblem of *truth, reason, morality and purity of character*, is correctly represented as suffering persecution, as being denounced by those in power as a wicked man going about stirring up the multitude to do wrong. Under this accusation, he is arrested, tried, or mocked with a trial, pronounced guilty, and executed! What the *power* of existing law cannot reach the *force* of clamour and rage accomplishes—his death! The voice of *reason* is for a time silenced.

But he rises again! he has a resurrection! he comforts his former companions! he promises to be with them to the end of the world! Yes, indeed, you cannot destroy *truth* you cannot extirpate *reason*, you cannot finally blast *morality and purity of character*, though apparently dead, though laid in the sepulchre, though lamented, though watched with Roman Guards, it will rise again, it will ascend, it will lead all who believe in it, and, believing, practise its virtues, to heaven to happiness. How beautiful, how correct the allegory! How much I feel myself to be a Jesus Christ of this day! Who then are really the wicked men, the persecutors or the persecuted?

In the year 1821, whilst I had the shop at 55, Fleet Street, and my sister looking after it, a venerable old gentleman frequented it, and would tell her, that her brother was really another Jesus Christ. The expression seemed strange to her, as it did also to me, at that time. But nearly all of the intelligent Quakers receive the story of Jesus Christ as an allegory, and personify the principle of reason as a moving spirit in each of them. Their sect originated on this ground, that Christianity was wholly a spiritual concern, and not a matter of forms and ceremonies. I have reasons to believe, that I have, at least, the sympathy of this respectable body, or that of the majority of them.

You have seen, Sir, and doubtless, you have heard Mr. Richman denounce me from the pulpit, as near as he could make the allusion, as a wicked man. I have reasons to think that I have received a general denunciation of this kind from every pulpit in the country, or with very few exceptions. Well, I feel, that I am not a wicked man, that, from the age of twenty, from the expiration of my apprenticeship, I have approached as near to the character of a good and moral young man, as it is possible for a young man to do. I have been alike industrious and sober, always making the best



possible use of my earnings and income, with as few foibles as the most careful can exhibit, and not without many temptations, many serious trials of temper, many causes of irritation. Feeling and knowing this, knowing that these generally, who have reached the same opinions with myself, have been some of the mildest and best of men, in every relation of life, I cannot but feel indignation, at such charges of wickedness, as Mr. Richman and others have thrown around me, and also, a spirit of resentment, that justifies my exposure of every thing in the shape or character of vice on their side: that, even justifies my classing among the whole, the vices of individuals. I invite them to free and fair discussion; they meet me with abuse and every kind of hostility, even approaching to murder. Am I not, then, more justified than they, in imputing the vices of individuals to the vices of the class, whilst they even invent accusations against me and others which are groundless? The spirit of Mr. Richman's sermons is extremely wicked, and shews, that, in the spirit of persecution, he was as violent and as bad a man as ever persecuted another to death. I did not feel satisfaction to hear of his death; but his sermons evince the disposition, that would have felt satisfaction at any kind of premature death befalling me. Treat me mildly and kindly, and I can be as mild as kind as any man; but treat me basely and hostilely, and you will kindle no feeling in my bosom but the spirit of resistance to death.

Speaking generally, I acknowledge, that it is improper to impute the vices of individuals to men in classes, and that systems and principles should be examined without any reference to character either public or private. Character is a matter that has but little to do with systems and principles. Of the impropriety of imputing the vices of individuals to classes of men, I gave Mr. Wood, the Chaplain of this Goal, a practical lesson, in 1823, such as he is not likely to forget. He lent me Rennel's Remarks on Scepticism. I found, that Rennel made Scepticism to be synonymous with profligacy. Making this a head for a note, I observed, that as a certain number of clergymen of the Established Church had lately been detected in the act of sodomy, I should like some Newton to calculate, upon the scale of chances, the probable number of those guilty of such practices, by those who had been detected. The book was returned, and this, with other notes, sent with it. A day or two after, when, according to act of parliament, he, the Chaplain, with the Gaoler and Surgeon, had to enter my room, he came serious confused and

agitated, and began to remonstrate on my imputation of such vices to the body of the clergy, whom he believed, to be as free from the vice as any men; at least, since celibacy had been abolished, and the abolition of those religious houses had taken place, which Mr. Cobbett has so strangely begun to deplore. You know well, Sir, that, our worthy chaplain is one of the few that would have saved Sodom and Gomorrha from destruction, had there been enough like him, and, I acknowledged to him, that, it was improper, to impute the vices of individuals to classes of men; but, I could hardly get him to acknowledge with all his virtues, that Rennel was wrong in imputing general profligacy to those who were sceptics towards the Christian Religion: for Rennel was orthodox, and our worthy chaplain is a right orthodox man only he likes a peaceable orthodoxy: though his opinions are well *riveted*, he would not quarrel with another about an opinion. However, I hope the lesson will not be lost upon him and others who partook of it. It had been well for Mr. Richman's character, if I had given him some such lesson, before he had preached those sermons; the second of which I now introduce.

#### SECOND SERMON.

PREACHED AUGUST 11, 1824, BEFORE THE JUDGES OF ASSIZE.

THE 12TH CHAP. OF ST. MARK, AND PART OF THE 34TH VERSE.

1. *Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God.*
2. As an analogy between the great truths of *natural* and *revealed* Religion, has been so *clearly* ascertained, and so *eloquently*, inculcated by a great Author, that his work is a pillar of strength, which Infidels may despair of being able to cast down; it may not be amiss to observe, that in the *general* harmony of God's works, there *appears* also *features* of resemblance between *material* and *moral* nature. While the *earth* pours forth such a profusion of vegetable bounty; things good for food, and pleasant to the eye, poisonous herbs and plants also abound; but these may be disarmed of their fatal properties, may be turned into certain *uses*, and take their appointed place in that mighty *whole*, of which, with such venerable simplicity of truth, the Historian of the primæval world declares, "God saw all the things that he had made, and, behold, they were very good." In respect to those *troubles* and *distractions* which arise from men's conflicting interests and passions, it may not be too much to say, that good is elicited on the *whole*. The energies of virtue are certainly more *exercised* and *sharpened*, by being called into *action*; there will be, in the end, a victory of good over evil; the God who *permits* a turbulent and injurious



world, never could have *ordained* it; the *result* will be demonstrative of a *wise* and *righteous* Providence. However melancholy be at *times* the prospect, Religious Meditation will ever find refuge in the words of *one* inspired writer, "Hitherto shalt thou go and no farther;" and in that of *another*, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." God will make all things *work* together for their *final* benefit, who know, love, and serve him. In this view of things, we need not be alarmed or dismayed, at that strange appalling effervescence (in the present day) of writings, not only against all the sanctities of the *Christian Faith*, but against the *root* of all *moral* action—the existence of an *intelligent* and *governing* first cause. *Strange*, I say, in that they are not to be sought for in *learned* works of deep and abstract speculations, and where they seem, indeed, to be introduced more as a *fanciful* play of intellect, a sort of trial, as to how "the *worse* could be made to appear the *better* reason," than for any *determined* purpose of *new-modelling* the opinions, the habits, and sentiments of the world. But these are scattered abroad in popular and familiarly speaking language, such as any man of good natural parts may easily write, and the plain *drift* of which, any one of good common education may easily comprehend. *Appalling*, in that though the vigour of the laws do, in a great *measure* restrain their deadly influence, as to what may be termed the *outworks* of civil society; yet are their propositions but *too* congenial to the strong corruptions of many, not to be admitted into the interior recesses of the heart, and *there* give a regular licence for all private vice. Every untameable sinner will be delighted with what frees him from the fear of God, and if he still thinks that he cannot (if there *be* a God) be *wicked* without being called to *account* for it, with pleasure will he view the *undermining* and *overthrowing* that *foundation* stone of all *coercive* Religion, an *hereafter*: yet for even *this* tremendous calamity has the *natural* course of Providence provided a *remedy* of no *inefficient* force. The friends of *virtue* and *happiness*, are on the watch; industrious and zealous, each in his station, it is not deemed by them *wise* to pass over, with silent contempt, arguments, empty and futile in *themselves*, but which, *meeting* with minds equally weak and vicious, find, *naturally*, but *too cordial* a reception: hence, is the warfare aided, and directed, as the *peculiarity* of the case requires. The dispute, in the hands of men of *sense* and *piety*, is *soon decided*; they *grapple* with the bold, and daring sophistry, in such a way that any degree of *real* reason, soon *perceives* its nothingness: the man *wonders* how the pernicious novelty first caught his attention, willingly *returns* back to those *venerated* tenets with which he was originally *imbued*, and is more than *ever* convinced that they are in themselves *firm* and *sure*. It would be rash and foolish in the extreme, for the sake of mere experiment, to provoke discussion concerning *any* truth of sacred importance; but, *if* such

truths are, by Divine permission with even something of a *menacing* aspect, assailed, let it be some consolation to the sincere believer, *reasonably* agitated on the subject, not only that the gates of Hell cannot prevail against them; but that these incitements to occasional *defences* of it, may *work* with many minds, who *before* took all things on *trust*, to a real *examination* of the three great questions, is there a God? is there a Christ? is there a Judgment? and if such mind be but *free* and *unprejudiced*, following that chain of deductions, which will spring from first principles well *digested*, by being thoroughly *understood*, he will say, there is a God, because there is Nature; there is a Christ, because there is a God; there is a Judgment, because there is a Christ. My belief is settled, because these great convictions do mutually depend on each other.

3. But as *malice* and *cunning* generally dwell together in bad men, *caution* is to be used in springing the mine which is thus to demoralize the globe. The black cup of Atheism would be too formidable a potion to be *at once* presented to the yet *wavering* and *hesitating* apostate. It would be too rash and venturous to tell him *at once*, that *man*, with all his fine faculties, differed not from a *beast* of the field—to rob him of a God of love and pity, and leave him naked and destitute, amidst all the miseries of life. What *they* call Deism may therefore be suffered to remain. But what a Deism! One perfectly *vague* in its precepts, *involved* in the darkness of conjecture, and so *unstable* as to any thing of a *solid* base, that the traveller over this new country will for ever find himself on a shifting sand, To render, therefore, the perversion somewhat more palatable, a sort of compromise is attempted; honor is paid to the *morality* of the Gospel, and its *founder* is acknowledged for a *wise* and *good* man, yet but such a one as the ancient sages, and legislators of the Heathen states: but this breaks in pieces that *richest jewel* of our Faith—its *Divine Certainty*. It puts us down again to the study of Heathen philosophy, it looks but to the *present* scene for the *probable* rewards of virtue, it tells us nothing of a joyful resurrection, it leaves us, as it found us, as to the sure hope of a blissful immortality.

4. There is a *third* species of Deists to whom I would *particularly* and *immediately* direct the words of my text, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." However *insidious*, not to say *hypocritical*, some of them may be in behalf of their favorite scheme, yet will we do them *this* justice; that they are not *gross*, and *vulgar* calumniators of the Scriptures, but write with the polish of education, and at least with a veil of candour which bespeaks some allowance and tenderness for them. These are they, which *do* pay due homage to that awful glory which clothes the person of Jesus Christ; they say with us, "never man spake like this man;" they concede to us a species of character perfectly consistent in all heaven taught perfections. Yes, measure only the *teacher* by his own *doctrines*, and compare *them* with the *pretensi-*



ous of the teacher, and the agreement is complete, wanting nothing; such a character, in short, as never appeared before or has done since in any given period of time.

5. In what then does your unhappiness consist, that you cannot with humility, and thankfulness, receive the testimony which God has given you of himself by his Son? There are, you say, obstacles and impediments which bar your way to a *full and entire* acquiescence in a revelation, of which you *wish* to partake; you *would* it were otherwise with you, you can only *lament* that it is not.

6. But permit me to ask, in this conference, two questions of *primary* necessity indeed: first, are you *sure* you are a *conscientious* believer in what is *termed* the Religion of Nature? have you as *firm* trust in God, and are you as *devout* towards him, as if you could with us say, "Our Father which art in heaven?" and are your *social* duties as *distinct* to you, and *commanding*, as if they were enjoined on you by him who said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?" Can you in short, with a sweet union of soul, accompany, through his masterly treatise, the warm and pathetic Wollaston, and say with him—It *must* be so—there is a God; there is a Providence; there is a life to come? If so, be not cast down. If you are *sincere* in your self-defence; if you could *indeed* join in prayer for better illumination—be comforted: you stand as it were, on the *threshold* of the Gospel, "thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

7. I entreat of you to consider these few things; First, that *natural* signs and tokens of themselves alone are insufficient to supply all that an honestly doubting mind would desire; that, if you admit the *Christian* attributes of God, it behoved him to give a due revelation of himself; but previous to the Gospel where will you find it? There are good systems of religion proceeding from mere *augmentative* grounds, subsequent to that blessed day-spring event; but they are all built on the information conveyed in the Old and New Testaments; they have been all composed since the promulgation of those glad tidings.—With such implements it was not hard to work. Compare them with whatsoever of ancient times approached nearest to them, and mark the immense distance that intervenes. *Here*, is regularity, uniformity, and a nice adjustment of parts; *there*, you are involved in all the labyrinths of discrepancy and doubt.

8. To serve God with a pure, holy, and rational worship, would certainly be the *natural* thought of *him* who could frame to himself the idea of one pure, holy, and wise God. Idolatry is in its very nature absurd and degrading towards a Being of such perfections. Turn back your eyes to the *universality* of this practice, among the most high minded and highly lettered men, and tell me here, in what differs the *Savage* in his remote island, all sparks of a worn out tradition nearly extinguished from his mind, and, with the basest superstition, bowing down to his mishapen stone

—what as to any thing of truth, differs he from him who burns incense to the personified powers of nature, in a temple, where the most exquisite rules of architecture are displayed, and where sculpture emulates the human countenance and form?

6. Whether or not this were a *judicial blindness* sent upon them, in that, not choosing “to retain God in their knowledge,” that is, though being sensible of their ignorance, they were contented with it, and careless and incurious, as to the best things; whence God gave them up to vain imaginations; or whether there was in them any *natural incapacity* of discerning the Sun of righteousness and truth, still the effect was the same: there prevailed a universal empire of vice and crime, and if there were any splendid exceptions, they were, as to virtues of the mere moral sense, or connected with the social principle.

10. “God be merciful to me a sinner,” or “Lord, what must I do to be saved,” is so little prominent in the first rate writings of their most celebrated names, that it does not appear, such ideas ever occupied their thoughts. *Here*, is then, I conceive, an *end* of controversy—whether or no a new voice of God to them was requisite for the children of men.

11. The revelation of the Gospel, with all its stamp of a divine mission, is now then proposed to you; and upon your own principles of following that noble gift of reason on which you profess to lean, what can you object against it; which is it? the Internal or External evidence, which stands in the way? do you demand a God from everlasting, self-originating? He is *there* so declared. Do all things come from him, and depend on him? You have *repeated* assertions to that purpose. Would you have his incomprehensible power chiefly expressed in acts of mercy and goodness? His own paternal accents assure you of that supporting truth. While his providence urges the vast machinery of the universe, is nothing too mean, or low for his guardian care? He is express to you, that it is so with him. Shall the evils of this life be amended and rectified in a better state, and far different be the end of the righteous and the wicked? This, you say, is what you *expect* to find in a *supreme* Being. Open the Bible; behold, it is ready for you. Consent to this, and I will reiterate. “*Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*”

12. Since *here*, then, all is *satisfactory*; you are *troubled*, we presume, only on account of those *peculiar* truths, which might not have been suggested by common thinking, or the real nature of which you cannot comprehend. For instance, Christ’s atonement, or the plurality of substances in the God-head—but why troubled? Men of as cool and dispassionate minds, as yourself, *examining*, and *sifting* every thing before they gave their assent, have found no difficulty in either the one or the other. Convinced by the meaning of language, that God had said it; they did not describe to him on what terms he would pardon sin; they pre-



tended not to know his hidden *councils*, whose extended government of systems no man could calculate or reach. Moderate and cautious in their suppositions, they never said, He *could* not have otherwise decreed. It was enough for them, that he *would* not; and therefore submissively left all the reins of Justice and Mercy in his hands. Nay, they were thankful, that it was so; it calmed their fears in cases where the enormity of guilt might seem too great for pardon; they could not tell how far repentance might go, to undo the terrible deservings of sin. But when such awful propitiation is held forth, as bows heaven and earth before him, in united adoration, man's fears are calmed, his heart rejoices, he has nothing to say, but "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

13. For the other sublime disclosure, it is indeed a *mystery*; but unless it had been *good* for us to contemplate it, God would not have so far irradiated himself unto us. The Deity of Christ is of consequence to teach us our infinite obligations to him; it does no *injury* to you, for the Spirit whose especial province it is, to *purify* and *change* your souls: experience *ought* to teach you that you cannot do it yourself. Be not then too *secure* to be redeemed; be not too *proud* to think you want no cleansing; and then you will not be "far from the Kingdom of God." If you are repulsed by what you deem *too* incomprehensible; if such incomprehensibility seems to approach to any thing like contradiction, you are not forbidden, in an humble and reverential spirit, saying, Lord forgive me, if I am wrong. To attempt reconciling such *intricate* though *solemn* propositions to the comprehensions of your own minds; you are not called to the dominion of *school-men* and *counsels*, but to what is delivered by *him*, who, in his own words, "came down from Heaven." He, who spake what he knew, and testified what he had seen. Only compare spiritual things with spiritual, and cast up the result. Are there not, if you allow any God at all, essential properties in him—self-existence, and past eternal duration, which your mind cannot grasp? In the secret wonders of nature, are there not a thousand instances in which *how* these things are, is hidden from you? Allow then that there *may* be no contradiction in certain views of the Divine essence, to a knowledge of which, you, in this mortal tabernacle, cannot arrive; and that it is utterly impossible there *can* be any, if the revelation of them is made by Jesus Christ.

14. As for the *external* evidence, suffer me to say, as briefly as I can, a few words on Miracle, Prophecy, and the present state of the world. You have by far too much good sense to herd with these *despicable* philosophers, who say, they cannot be. Is not creation a miracle? You cannot *disprove* that the world was made in time; and even supposing it eternal, yet if such eternity proceeded from the *freedom* of the Divine will, that same will might have acted differently, and ordered it into being at any future season. In regard to the *evidence* for miracles, we both of

us stand upon a par. They are facts of history, and their authenticity must be determined by the usual tests of historical evidence. Here is a *cause* for the miracles, and the miracles are *commensurate* to the cause. An attestation to a *Divine* commission was wanted, and *they* are the *best* that could have been given for that end, nothing but a Divine power could have effected them. Prophecy supplies a kind of *mixed* argument; it is partly *miraculous*. For, certainly, to foreknow contingent events must be a miraculous gift; but it is not a miracle subjected to the eyes: it is an act of the mind only which can pronounce it supernatural, by a close examination of the fulfilment with the correspondent event. But only do this with the Jewish prophecy. See how *intimately* they coincide with the singular and unparalleled history of that church and people—a history, as unparalleled in their prosperity, as it is in their long foretold dispersion. They were the depositaries of the only oracles of God; from then was to proceed, at the time appointed, the renovation of all things. It is most probable that they did not *fathom* the full scope and intent of all that God had in store for them; but their hopes and longings for something incomparably great, wonderful, and holy, were cherished and kept alive, and their faith thereby saved from destruction, by this trump of prophecy being at due intervals sounded among them.

But *do* (the question is) these prophecies appear, now the events to which they are supposed to refer are past, *exactly* suited to them? I will leave this to your judgment—if it be so. Are there *degrees* of application arising in a beautiful *order*, so successively adapted, as to combat every thought of its being a thing of chance? if so, exclaim with me this is the Great power of God.

16. *Thirdly*. There can be no *stupendous* effect without an *adequate* cause. Did the world for ages flourish in science and political economy, with the darkness, the impurity, the atrocities of Paganism, still the same? *What* has swept away these abominations from the earth? *What* has civilized and regenerated the stern tribes of Germany, and the North, while it enlightened and reformed the more docile inhabitants of Italy and Greece? Look at the City on the Seven Hills. In about three centuries, she suddenly bowed her imperial head to the persecuted Cross, and the Gods of the Capitol have never regained their place—and *this* too is the scroll of prophecy. The despised teacher of Nazareth *did* declare that *his* kingdom *should* prevail—and so it *has* been. Still earlier was it beheld in vision, that the Stone without hands should smite the image—it has smote it, and crumbled it to dust.

17. *Finally*. Deride not our grace of faith. *You* must put faith in many things which are not the objects of sense; *you* must put faith in the succession of the course of nature, *you* must put faith in the providential administration of things. But *yours* either escapes your mind and is lost in an unconscious habit of daily use, and is at best, a cold and dry principle which enters not into, and



rules the affections. *Ours* is full of hope, trust, and joy; *ours* is worth having. It bears us up in trials and distress; it enables us to overcome temptation; it keeps up, even here, a connection with friends departed; it tramples upon the crown and dart of death; it is to be prayed for with all the aspirations of a duly awakened soul. O! say not then—almost thou persuadest me to be a christian. But, all penitence, love, and astonishment, say, with Thomas, from the very bottom of your heart—my Lord and my God.

1. If the Kingdom of God be on the earth, we are all alike near to it, or in it. If not on the earth, we are all alike distant from it. Mr. Richman should have told us whereabout his God reigns. But this is one of the mysteries of the Christian Faith, in which even the Priest is not initiated. *Kingdom of God*, and *Kingdom of the Devil* seem to be two rival kingdoms somewhere, and, as some silly, bad-hearted people describe the English and French, *natural enemies*! There are no natural enemies but birds and beasts of prey and those animals, whose superiority over vegetables consists in devouring each other. It must be a contemptible God that cannot put down the kingdom of the Devil; unless they, reign and divide mankind by agreement. Even then, there is something extremely defective in the theology. It is by no means a logical theology. Neither of their Godships, or their Kingships, worthy of being worshipped or served. It is all an allegory: all a mispersonification.

2. It is true, I despair of throwing down the analogy between natural and revealed religion, which a certain great author has inculcated; but I do not despair of throwing down both natural and revealed religion, and am sure, that, I have already done it, as far as the shewing of its bad foundation can do it.

This long paragraph is a strange heap of contradictions and bad logic. The second sentence concludes with saying, that, "God saw all the things that he had made, and, behold, they were very good." The third sentence mentions *troubles* and *distractions* which produce good upon the whole: There would be more good without them. The fourth sentence, speaks of a *victory of good over evil*. If God made all things, and all good, whence came evil? Was the *evil principle* in existence before God or the *good principle*? Such is the inference of these contradictions. Again, we are told, that "the God who *permits* a turbulent and injurious world, never could have *ordained* it." Who did ordain it; and when or why was it ordained? It is clear,

Sir, that Mr. Richman makes the Devil to be God's elder brother. But who, the father of them, he does not condescend to tell us. A strange blundering affair, is this said theology.

In another sentence, he tells you, that you need not be alarmed or dismayed at that which is appalling. If it appals, it must alarm and dismay. Again, that the *root* of all *moral* action is in an *intelligent* and *governing first cause*. Whilst he has just asserted as much as that his first cause was the principle of evil! The root of moral action is in self and social happiness, and has nothing to do with either first or fiftieth cause. When a man talks about a first cause, he should always define it and assure us that it is first. *First-cause* is a very ridiculous phrase, about which much is said and nothing known. Indeed, it is a contradiction in itself; for a cause wants a power to make it a cause. First and second causes are only known to the most ignorant men: they make a part of theology: the moment we begin to investigate them, we know less and less, until, at last, we confess that we know nothing about them.

He complains, that my publications "are scattered abroad in popular and familiarly speaking language, such as any man of good natural parts may easily write, and the plain *drift* of which, any one of good common education may easily comprehend." Indeed! This is a very high compliment! This is the very thing that I aim at! Who, or what education, can comprehend the drift of these sermons? He had a thousand pounds a year to preach mystery, to preach that which no one should comprehend; but, at which all should be surprised and worship! That was the nature of his craft. And my plain speaking publications were his bane. A man worships only because he is ignorant of the object of his worship.

Then, he goes on to call these plain speaking publications, which every person can comprehend, *bold and daring sophistry*! *Sophistry* is what no person can comprehend, such as these contradictions! He says, that men of sense piety soon decide the contest, by grappling with the enemy; but how did he do it; or who else has done it, other than in the pulpit, where the speaking goes all on one way. He tells us, that since Divine permission permits the sacred truths to be assailed, it leads to an examination of the three great questions: Is there a God? Is there a Christ? Is there a Judgment? And, mark the admirable logic, the profound reasoning, the wonderful climax! "There is a God, because



there is nature; there is a Christ, because there is a God, there is a Judgment, because there is a Christ." Was any thing ever more clear as a mystery? Here is no plain speaking for you, nothing for common sense to comprehend; this is *learning* above all men's comprehension! Here is Christian logic for you!

But, supposing, for the sake of an argument, that there was a being called God, with all the powers attributed to that powerless nenentity: why does it follow, that there must be a Christ and a Judgment? Is not that ridiculous story, about the fall of man, and the mediation between god and man, child's-play, between this God and his son? What aid or persuasion can an all powerful being want? And, if we yield the God with his mediating son, what need have we of a Judgment? In such a large affair as the concerns of a thousand millions of human beings, one would think, that it would be necessary, for this God and Son, to judge as they go, and not to allow a thousand generations of criminals to accumulate untried and unwhipt. Would it not be worth while, for some Newton to calculate, how many Jack Ketches and Whipping Posts there will be required at the day of Judgment? Besides, if Judgment is to come, why has hell been so long prepared to no purpose? Heaven must be yet empty, and all the spirits, good and bad, waiting in some prison for the General Assize, for the last Gaol Delivery. I shall be very glad to see you High Sheriff again, Mr. Garland, and, if I am to be a prisoner, again, to be yours. Depend upon it, that, I will make a long day of my case, if any charge be made against me, and I allowed to defend myself. If all are to be judged, if all, as it is said, are criminals, who is to give evidence? Are the criminals to give evidence one against another? If, as it is again said, the Book of Life contains the particulars of every man's case, then, indeed, is the judgment complete at the time of death, unless we are to be tried for our acts in the spirit. The end of all inquiry into this subject is, that Christianity is the most ridiculous idolatry that was ever practised among mankind.

"There is a God, because there is Nature," said Mr. Richman. If he had said that to me, I should have asked him to define what he meant by the word *nature*. Put the question to yourself, Mr. Garland, and see what proof you find, in the word *nature*, of a distinct being under the word *God*. What is *Nature*? All that we can say in answer is, that it is a general something, of the particulars of which we

are ignorant. And the only conclusion to which we can come on this head, as to the word *God*, is, that the only proof we have of the existence of a being under that name, is, our ignorance of the particulars which constitute the word *nature*. Can our ignorance be a proof of any thing? Does it argue the existence of any being or quality beyond ourselves? Is it not rather a proof that there is *not*, than that there is a God? All *proof* consists of knowledge, and not of ignorance. Our ignorance, on that head, of a God, about which we talk and think so much, is good presumptive proof, that no such being ever had existence. Were there such an existence, there is fair inference, that we should not be so ignorant of it. And, at least, even on the Preacher's side of the question, if there were such a God, and if he has not thought proper to make himself better known to us, we are not, upon any principle of justice, as inferior beings, required to trouble ourselves about him, a so much superior being.

As for Mr. Richman to say, that, "there is a God because there is nature," I may as well say, that there is a God, or that there is a Devil, because he, the preacher, was killed in a storm. The storm was a component part of Nature, and it proves, that nature was a blind power in relation to his death. These sermons prove that *Christian* or *Classical Learning* and *Common Sense* are very distinct matters. A man may be full of the former without a particle of the latter. A *knowledge of words* and a *knowledge of things* are two very distinct kinds of knowledge. Mr. Richman studied and taught *words*; I study *things* and endeavour correctly to explain them.

It does not become me to speak of the Deism on which Mr. Richman has descanted in this sermon, I put it down as idolatry; but it is, certainly, an idolatry less ridiculous than Christianity. It is a mental personification of power, where we cannot see the personification. It is the result of ignorance and not of knowledge. Is it a fair conclusion for me to draw, that, because I can cut a goose quill into a pen, there must have been a being with qualities like mine to have made the quill for my use? Is there the least analogy between the production of the quill, and the cutting it into a pen when produced? If three elements will make a particular compound, what proof have we, that these elements were designedly qualified for that purpose? It is clear, that the only proof a man has for an intelligent God, personified like himself, or like any other object, or unlike any other object, is his ignorance. And let me repeat the question, can



ignorance be offered as a proof of any thing, as a satisfactory substitute for knowledge?

I presume, that I have fairly done my task, in refuting the contents of these sermons, and, as the bulk of this second sermon is, *CHRISTIANITY against DEISM*, I will bring a Deist against Mr. Richman, to speak for himself. I will introduce the ninth and last chapter of a work, entitled: "Christendom in confusion; or the source of discord, persecution, and oppression, demonstrated." This is an American work, printed at Baltimore. William Munday, the author, is really a Deist, of the stamp of Thomas Paine, and has a horror at what is called Atheism. As a Deist, he is a very religious man, and such was Thomas Paine. My pride, my boast, is, that I am free from the whole nonsense, and have no more religion than any of those animals falsely called irrational. These Deists mistake religion for morality, or have not learnt to separate morality from religion. But many of those, who call themselves Deists, are, in reality, Atheists. Deism is a sort of speaking by parable, an allegory, a personification of blind powers, by the aid of the fancy; which has been adopted from the fear of persecution, or out of respect to the prejudices of other idolators. Many are they who advise me to write more about Deism and less about Atheism; but I heed them not. HONESTY is my guide, and TRUTH the end of my journey.

In this chapter, from Mr. Munday's book, you will see the sentiments of the old philosophers contrasted with the paltry and corrupted plagiarisms in the New Testament. You will see a proof of what I have often asserted, that, of any thing good, the New Testament has nothing original; nor did it ever make a moral man.

#### CHAP. IX.

It is deemed unnecessary to proceed further in the investigation, of what is called holy writ; enough has been shown to satisfy men, who are disposed to reflect on the subject of its falsehood, and those who are not, to reason with them is in vain. It only remains now to be shown, according to promise, that the doctrines of vital religion, which are incorporated into the christian system, were pirated in substance, by the fabricators of the New Testament, from the writings, doctrines and pious precepts of the divine philosophers\*, many of whom lived in the fourth, fifth, sixth and eighth centuries, before the christian era.

\* Christians are puzzled to account for the celestial doctrines of philosophy, and being unwilling to attribute them to the universal law of God,  
No. 8, Vol. XI.

The following is a succinct view of the doctrines of Divine Philosophy, which for the sake of perspicuity, are contrasted with the doctrines of the New Testament.

*Divine Philosophy.*

1. You ask me what monument attests the existence of the Deity? I answer, the universe; the dazzling splendour and majestic progress of the heavenly bodies; the correspondence of that innumerable multitude of beings; in fine, this whole, and its admirable parts, which all bear the impress of a divine hand; in which all is grandeur, wisdom, proportion and harmony. I will add the concurrence of all nations: not to compel you to acquiescence by authority; but because their belief constantly maintained by the cause which first produced it, is an incontestible proof of the impression which the enchanting beauties of nature have ever made on all minds<sup>1</sup>.

Reason co-operating with my senses, likewise points out to me the most excellent of artificers in the most magnificent of works. I view a man walking, and I infer that he has within him an active principle. His steps conduct him wherever he wishes to go, and I thence conclude that this principle adapts the means to the end which it proposes—Let us apply this example. All nature is in motion; there is therefore a first mover. This motion is subjected to a constant order; a Supreme Intelligence therefore exists<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Plato.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle. 4 Centuries before Christ.

inherent in man, because that truth tends to the destruction of all supernatural systems of religion, they conjecture that the divine wisdom and doctrines of the ancients, were derived from the Mosaic Institution. But all conjectures on this head are silenced by George Campbell, doctor of divinity, who is esteemed a great authority in Christendom, and a most able defender of miracles. "The notion" says this high christian authority, "that the Greeks borrowed their opinions on this subject," to wit, that the world was produced by an intelligent cause, "from the books of Moses, a notion for which some Jewish writers, some christian fathers, and even some moderns have warmly contended, appears void of all foundation. These opinions in Greece, as hath been observed, were of a very early date; whereas that there existed such a people as the Jews, seems scarce to have been known there till about the time of the Macedonian conquests. No sooner were they known than they were hated, and their laws and customs universally despised. Nor is there the shadow of reason to think, that the Greeks knew any thing of the sacred writings till a considerable time afterwards, when that version of them was made into their language, which is called the Translation of the Seventy\*."

\* To this note, it may be added, that there is not the slightest trace of such a people as the Jews living in Syria before the Babylonish Colonization. Therefore, there were no sacred books from which the Greeks could borrow. There is more proof, that the Jews were an African race, brought captive to Babylon, than that they were an Asiatic race.

R. C.



At the same time contemplate with Pythagoras the laws of universal harmony, and incessantly have before your eyes the regularity in the distribution of the different worlds, and the disposition of the heavenly bodies; the concurrence of all wills in a wisely governed republic, and of all the passions and emotions in a virtuous soul; all beings labouring in concert for the maintenance of order, and order preserving the universe and its minutest parts; a God the author of this sublime plan, and men destined by their virtues to be subservient to him, and co-operate with him in his great design. Never did system display more genius, or give a more exalted idea of the grandeur and dignity of man.

Theagenes, 5. C. B. C.

#### *New Testament.*

1. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

Rom. i. chap. 19, 20.

Nothing in the New Testament resembles the enlightened reasoning, and pious contemplation, relative to the existence and sublime order of God, as stated under the head of Divine Philosophy.

2. We say that men owe obedience to laws which existed antecedently to every human institution. These laws, proceeding from that intelligence which formed and still preserves the universe, are the relations which we bear to that exalted Being, and to our fellow creatures. We violate them when we commit an act of injustice, and offend both against society and against the first Author of the order by which society is maintained.

Xenophon. 5. C. B. C.

2. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

3. As to us nothing can justify vice in our eyes, because our duties are never in opposition to our true interests<sup>1</sup>. *Though our insignificance hide us in the bosom of the earth, or our power arise us to the skies, we are ever in the presence of a judge who beholds our actions and our thoughts, and who alone gives a sanction to order, powerful charms to virtue, a real dignity to man, and a le-*

gitimate foundation to the esteem he entertains for himself<sup>1</sup>. I respect positive laws, because they flow from those which God has deeply imprinted on my heart; I aspire to the approbation of my fellow mortals, because, like me, they bear in their minds a ray of his light, and in their souls the germs of virtues of which he inspires them with the desire. Lastly I fear the remorse of conscience, because that would degrade me from the elevation to which I attain by acting conformably to the will of the Supreme Being<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Plato, 4.      <sup>2</sup> Xenophon, 5.      <sup>3</sup> Achytas, 4. C. B. C.

NOTE.—In several of the extracts of Philosophy, the lines in *Italic*, are in substance, contained in the passages quoted from the New Testament, and for comparison, placed opposite to them.

3. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight : but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.      Heb. iv. 13.

4. But that according to us, the measure of all things being God himself, he should be the model by which we should regulate our sentiments and actions.      Plato, 4. C. B. C.

4. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.      2 Cor. x. 13.

5. We cannot conceal our actions from his sight, nor even our thoughts.      Epicharmus, 5. C. B. C.

5. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.      Luke, xii. 2.

6. *His essence is incomprehensible and ineffable*<sup>1</sup>, but he speaks distinctly by his works, and his language is intelligible to the whole world; a more refulgent light would be useless to us, and doubtless would not accord with his plan<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Plato, 4.      <sup>2</sup> Onatas, 6. C. B. C.

6. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!      Rom. xi. 33.

7. To desire to know God, is to desire to partake in his happiness<sup>1</sup>. Happiness consists in wisdom, and wisdom in the knowledge of God<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, 4.      <sup>2</sup> Theagenes, 5. C. B. C.



7. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

John, xvii. 3.

8. I ask of the Deity to protect me against my passions<sup>1</sup>; to grant me true beauty, which is that of the soul, and the knowledge and virtue of which I have need; *to bestow on me the power to refrain from committing any injustice; and especially the courage to endure, when necessary the injustice of others*<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Zaleucus, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, 4. C. B. C.

8. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath.

Rom. xii. 18, 19.

[How inconsistent is this, with the following persecuting passage? And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. 2 Cor. x. 6.]

9. To render ourselves agreeable to the Deity, we ought to remember that we are ever in his presence<sup>1</sup>, to undertake nothing without imploring his assistance<sup>2</sup>, *to aspire in some degree to resemble him by justice and sanctity*<sup>3</sup>, to refer to him all our actions, to fulfil punctually the duties of our condition, and to consider as the first of them all that of being useful to mankind; *for the more good we do, the more we merit to be ranked among the number of his children and his friends*<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Charondas, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Bias, one of the seven sages, 6. C. B. C.

9. Be ye therefore perfect even as your father which is in heaven is perfect.

Mat. v. 48.

Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

John, xv. 14.

10. The Divine Being has not explained to us the nature of the punishments and rewards appointed after death. All that I affirm, from the ideas which we have of order and justice, and from the consent of all nations and all ages, is, that every one will be dealt with according to his merits; and that the just man suddenly passing from the nocturnal day of this life to the pure and resplendent light of a second existence, shall enjoy that unchangeable happiness of which this world only presents the feeble image.

Plato.

10. And if ye call on my father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

I Peter, i. 17.

But, as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

I Cor. ii. 9.

11. Our duties towards ourselves is to assign to the spiritual part of us the greatest honours next to those which we pay to the Divinity; never to pollute it by vices or remorse, sell it to riches, sacrifice it to pleasure; nor ever on any occasion to prefer a substance so terrestrial and frail as the body, to a substance whose origin is from heaven, and whose duration is eternal.

Plato.

11. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Mat. vi. 19, and xvi. 26.

12. Our duties towards other men, are all contained in this rule: *do not unto others what you would not wish they should do unto you.*

Isocrates, 4. C. B. C.

12. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

Luke, vi. 31.

13. Nothing is so rare as a virtuous man; because to be such in reality we must possess the courage to be virtuous at all times, in all circumstances, in defiance of all obstacles, and in contempt of the most powerful temptations of interests.

Plato.

13. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Rom. v. 3, Philip. iv. 11.

14. We have our dependence elsewhere, and should look up to that power, to which we are indebted for all that we can pretend to that is good.

Seneca.

14. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 Cor. v. 1.

15. It is to God, that we live, and to him that we must approve



ourselves. What does it avail us that our consciences are hidden from men, when our souls lie open to God.

Seneca.

15. For in him we live, and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also of his offspring.

Acts, xvii. 28.

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16. He that has a conscience gives evidence against himself.

Seneca.

16. For if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.

1 John, iii. 20.

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17. Consider the majesty, the goodness, and the mercies of the Almighty; a friend that is always at hand.

Seneca.

17. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Heb. xiii. 5.

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18. What delight can it be to God, the slaughter of innocent creatures, or the worship of bloody sacrifices? *Let us purge our minds, and lead virtuous and honest lives.*

Seneca.

18. Cleanse your hands ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

James, iv. 8.

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19. His pleasure lies not in the magnificence of temples made with stone, but in the piety and devotion of consecrated hearts.

Seneca.

19. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?

1 Cor. iii. 16.

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20. In all the difficulties and crosses of my life this is my consideration; *since it is God's will, I do not only obey, but assent to it; nor do I comply out of necessity, but inclination.*

Seneca.

20. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

Rom. xiii. 5.

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21. Let no man think himself the safer in his wickedness for want of a witness; for God is omniscient, and to him nothing can be a secret.

Lactantius.

21. Fear them not therefore : for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed ; and hid, that shall not be known.

Mat. x. 26.

22. Yet pure virtue finds more magnanimity in forgiving and forgetting injuries. She has dictated these maxims, which we find in many authors : speak not evil of your enemies<sup>1</sup> ; far from endeavouring to harm them, seek to convert their hatred into friendship<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Pittacus. <sup>2</sup> Cleobulus. Two of the seven sages, 6. C. B. C.

22. Bless them which persecute you : bless, and curse not. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Rom. xii. 14, 21.

23. From the utmost elevation to which human wisdom can attain, Socrates proclaimed to mankind this rigorous precept :  
*" It is not permitted to you to render evil for evil."* Plato.

23. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Rom. xii. 17.

Here then, is seen in substance, such a resemblance of ideas, sentiments, doctrines and precepts, as are not, it is apprehended, to be found in any original writings of different authors on the same subject ; which strange coincidence in the writings of philosophy, and of the New Testament, on the subject of religion, can be accounted for only on the ground of plagiarism, or equality of religious principles, spiritual light, and knowledge of divine truth. If the crime of literary theft is attached to either, it must be to the New Testament, since it was written subsequent to the doctrines of divine philosophy, which are truly original, their being nothing like them on record of prior date. What then will the advocates for the New Testament, advance to prove it original ?—They have no proof to offer, and can only conjecture in palliation of the charge of plagiarism, that the authors of the New Testament, were influenced by the same principles, and had in common with the teachers of celestial philosophy, the same light and knowledge of divine truth. But admitting this palliative plea against the charge of plagiarism, how will they prove that God, made void the rational religion of divine philosophy, which was " admirable" and " truly worthy of man," in order to introduce the mysterious religion of the New Testament ?—To give some sort of colouring to their implied mutability of divine order, the advocates for the New Testament, have recourse to the most futile subterfuge ; they contend for its pre-eminence ; but in this also they grossly err. Genuine philosophy as above stated, is uniformly rational, con-



sistent, just and mild—the true characteristics of the heavenly source from whence it is immediately derived. But the New Testament is a confused medley of reason and absurdity, truth and falsehood, meekness and tyranny, which are the certain marks of corruption, imposture and fabrication. But in order to bring the question of pre-eminence, to a speedy issue, and show where the just claim of superiority rests, let the following passages of the above contrast, be duly considered.

*Divine Philosophy.*

We say that men owe obedience to laws which existed antecedently to every human institution. These laws, proceeding from that intelligence which formed and still preserves the universe, are the relations which we bear to that exalted Being, and to our fellow-creatures. We violate them when we commit an act of injustice, and offend both against society and against the first author of the order by which society is maintained.

Xenophon, 5 century before Christ.

*New Testament.*

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Rom. xiii, 1, 2.

On comparing these passages, the mind is forcibly struck with the transcendent wisdom, truth and mildness of the one, and the ignorance, falsehood and tyranny of the other. The rational doctrine of philosophy, enlightens and inspires the mind with exalted ideas, of the relations it bears to God, and to its fellow-creatures; and its sublime truth delights and captivates the soul. It teaches that acts of injustice are an offence both against God and society, and a violation of the laws and principles of equity, truth and justice, which proceeded from God, and dwelt in the soul of man, antecedent to every human institution. Consequently human laws, and powers, that are not instituted in justice, are a violation of those divine principles, and are not ordained of God, but are of perversion and corruption; and to resist such powers, would be neither injustice nor an offence, but meritorious in the sight of God, and tend to the good of society; it would be co-operating with God, in support of the order by which the welfare of society is maintained.

It is very certain that the Creator and Preserver of the universe, ordained that high powers should be instituted in this world, for the maintenance of justice and order, and perpetuated to the latest

generation. But when wicked men get possession of those powers, corrupt and abuse them, it is not resisting the ordinance of God to resist higher powers, thus corrupted and turned from their proper objects, and in a state of purity confide them to other men. For power without virtue, without justice, is not of God, and it would be disgraceful, yea criminal not to resist them.

The authors of the New Testament, to say the least, were too ignorant to make any distinction, between the powers which govern in righteousness, and those that rule by injustice and oppression. According to their doctrine, there are no powers but of God, and however unjust, and oppressive they may be, every soul is required to yield passive obedience and be subject unto them; and that whosoever resisteth the powers that be, resisteth the ordinance of God, and shall receive to themselves damnation. Is not this false and tyrannical?—Is it not a sanctuary for despotism, and calculated to reduce the world to abject slavery?—It is, and suits the despotic powers, which in every part of Christendom, America only excepted, are leagued with priestcraft, to support the notorious fabrication.

Did not the people of America, with the illustrious Washington at their head, resist the oppression of a high and mighty power?—And did not the Governor of the universe crown their efforts with success?—Say then, ye advocates for the truth of the New Testament, shall those brave men, who resisted “the powers that be,” and achieved the freedom and independence of America, “receive to themselves damnation,” for so doing?—The falsehood is too monstrous—you surely do not—you cannot believe it; nor can you place the least confidence in either the New Testament, or its authors, without deservedly incurring the reproach of gross and glaring inconsistency.

It is known by the experience of every age, from the earliest records of time, that the principles and laws by which the supreme Being governs the universe, are like their Author, perfect and unchangeable. But the authors of the New Testament, represent God, changing his laws from time to time, just as impostors and fanatics change their fabrications, in order to keep pace with the increasing light of reason. Thus the New Testament was fabricated to supplant the old fabric of the Jews, which was utterly too sensual and ferocious, to become popular in the world, or afford any confidence in its continuance; and had it not been propped up as the word of God, by the artifice of the New Testament, it would doubtless long since have been rejected by the Jews themselves. And thus Baron Swedenborgh, has superseded both their fabrics, by a new influx of his fanatic brain, to do away the literal absurdities of their fabrications, and give them by his doctrine of correspondence, a rational meaning; and wild as the attempt was, it has met with considerable success among the christians,



who were dissatisfied with their doctrine of three Gods. But if they understand and believe in the Baron's doctrine, they are no longer christians, for his doctrine denies the fall of man in a representative, and also denies Christ, as a sacrifice, or an atonement for sin, which is denying the fundamental doctrines of christianity. And it is not unlikely, that before the end of another century, the world will hear of another influx, advent, or revelation, from the fanatics that those devices will produce, (unless they are abandoned) and another change of the laws of God, with respect to the government of the moral world.

Christians would do well to deal honestly with themselves, and examine on what ground they believe the Old and New Testament, to be the word of God; and it would greatly assist them in their inquiry, to consider the remarks of Isaac Watts, doctor of divinity, in his book of Logic, second part, fourth section of the third chapter. He there observes, that "we choose our particular set and party in the civil, the religious, and the learned life, by the influence of education. In the the colleges of learning, some are for the nominals, and some for the realists, in the science of metaphysics, because their tutors were devoted to these parties. And every religion has its infant votaries, who are born, live and die in the same faith, without examination of any article. The Turks, are taught early to believe in Mahomet; the Jews, in Moses; the Heathens worship a multitude of Gods, under the force of their education. And it would be well if there were not millions of Christians, who have little more to say for their religion, than that they were born and bred up in it. The greatest part of the christian world can hardly give any reason why they believe the Bible to be the word of God, but because they have always believed it, and they were taught so from their infancy. As Jews, and Turks, and American Heathens, believe the most monstrous and incredible stories, because they have been trained up amongst them, as articles of faith; so the Papists believe their transubstantiation, and make no difficulty of assenting to impossibilities, since it is the current doctrine of their catechisms."

The truth of the above remarks is obvious, they form a mirror, by which the christian reader may see the true ground of his faith in the Bible. Doctor Watts, was one of the highest authorities in Christendom; according to his opinion, there are millions of christians, who have little more to say for their religion, than that they were born and bred up in it." And that "the greatest part of the christian world, can hardly give any reason why they believe the Bible to be the word of God, but because they have always believed it, and they were taught so from their infancy." But of this the learned doctor, to have been consistent, ought not to have complained, for the people are not called on to exercise their reason, and understand what they believe, but they are com-

manded to believe, whether they can understand or not, or they "shall be damned." This is Doctor Watt's logic, for teaching the right use of reason, that men shall be damned if they do not believe what they cannot understand, and then reviled for not giving a reason why they believe! This kind of logic, is exactly calculated to subvert reason, and the intellectual powers of those, who believe the Bible to be the word of God, by cruelly driving them to the fallacious subterfuges and glosses of sophistry, in order to apologise for their groundless and unreasonable faith.

In the same section of the doctor's book of Logic, he says, "it is upon the same ground that children are trained up to be whigs and tories betimes; and every one learns the distinguishing terms of his own party, as the Papists learn to say their prayers in Latin, without any meaning, reason, or devotion." While the truth of his remarks, with respect to the prejudices, and nominal faith of christians, is acknowledged, it ought at the same time to be noticed, that the doctor discovers something of that party prejudice, which he has so justly exposed, and exhibits another instance of his inconsistency, and also of his great want of charity, and truth towards the poor priest-ridden papists; for they may, like all other christians have done, with respect to their faith in creeds and doctrines, superstitiously repose confidence and faith, in Latin forms of prayer which they have no literal, or rational knowledge of, and with "meaning" in the use of them, worship God, from the best motives and with true "devotion." And whether christians are commanded by their priests, to worship God, by faith in doctrines, or Latin forms of prayer, which they do not understand, it is precisely the same thing in principle and effect. Moreover, all forms, and doctrines, are nothing more than appendages to religion, distinct from its essence—that which constitutes vital religion, or true devotion, is the forsaking or turning from all sin unto God, and placing the affections supremely on spiritual and divine objects; which can be done without form, system, or doctrine, by yielding obedience to the internal commands of the law of God, and to the dictates of reason and conscience. Yet, a true system, and doctrine, are good in their place, they tend to promote order, and religion, and cannot be dispensed with consistent with the general welfare of society.

The doctor's cure for religious prejudice is very rational and salutary, and if attended to would prove effectual; but it is in direct contradiction to the denunciations of the New Testament, and doctrines of christianity, which shows that reason, and christianity are irreconcilable, and its advocates are embarrassed whenever they attempt to make them harmonize. The doctor's method of cure, is in the same section with his above remarks, and as follows: "This sort of prejudice must be cured by calling all the principles of our young years to the bar of more mature reason,



that we may judge of the things of nature and political affairs by juster rules of philosophy and observation: and even the matters of religion must be first inquired into by reason and conscience, and when these have led us to believe scripture to be the word of God, then that becomes our sovereign guide, and reason and conscience must submit to receive its dictates."

Here then, after all those thundering menaces of damnation against those who believe not the Old and New Testament, to be the word of God, and also against the exercise of reason, for "he that doubts," says the New Testament, "is condemned already." Men have a right according to the judgment of a logician, and doctor of divinity, to judge by the light of reason, and conscience whether the Bible be the word of God, or not; and that, not until they are rationally convinced of its truth, are reason and conscience required to submit, and receive its dictates. This is all that philosophy, that the rational man of God, that the Deist asks, to be allowed free and open investigation, which will improve the human mind, enlighten the understanding, and annihilate falsehood, tyranny, and oppression. For this let every enlightened man in America, exert his rational powers, while the country is yet free. And the God of reason, Author of that godlike attribute in man, will bless their efforts, consume the falsehoods and rubbish of priestcraft, by the power of truth, through their instrumentality, and deliver the souls and bodies of the human race, from their confederated oppressors—Popes, Bishop and Kings.

Until this glorious work is accomplished, it is happy for the world, that in the midst of the confusion of old and new laws, systems and doctrines—the inventions of priests, that the unchangeable laws of God, over-rules them all, as the divine Cicero has proclaimed to the world. This enlightened man, speaks thus: "The true law is right reason, conformable to the nature of things, constant, eternal, diffused through all, which calls us to duty by commanding; deters us from sin by forbidding; which never loses its influence with the good; nor ever preserves it with the wicked. This law cannot be over-ruled by any other, nor abrogated in whole, or in part: nor can we be absolved from it, either by the senate or by the people; nor are we to seek any other comment, or interpreter of it but itself: nor can there be one law at Rome, and another at Athens; but the same eternal immutable law comprehends all nations, at all times, under one common master and governor of all—God. He is the inventor, propounder, enactor of this law; and whoever will not obey it, must first renounce himself, and throw off the nature of man; by doing which he will suffer the greatest punishments though he should escape all the other torments which are commonly believed to be prepared for the wicked." Here ends the quotation from Cicero.

And now to conclude the subject, as the law of God is perfect,

and therefore unchangeable, and as the religion taught by the ancients, many centuries before the New Testament was written, was "admirable" and "truly worthy of man," as acknowledged by the celebrated Rollin, and which the above statement of their doctrine clearly proves, the unavoidable conclusion is, that the New Testament is a fabrication; and this conclusion will be readily admitted, by all who reflect on the fraudulent practices of the Roman priests, with whom it originated in obscurity, and by whom it was concealed from the world fifteen centuries; and on the despotism, contradictions, inconsistencies, absurdities and falsehoods, which it contains.

Having fairly laid prostrate Mr. Richman's two sermons, preached before you, as High Sheriff, and the Judges of Assize, for 1824, I will conclude this letter, probably, the last that I shall have occasion to address to you, with a few observations as to Gaol matters. Since I wrote my first printed letter to you, or that of August last, whilst it was printing, I had a visit from you. In the course of that visit, I received the same dignified urbanity of manners, which you shewed to me at the first assize. But there was an exception, there was one point on which I think you went too far, you attempted an apology for Mr. Sturt's conduct towards me, by saying, that, you thought, if you had been in his place, you should have done as he did. Here you were wrong; for you had filled his place, and had you been of his disposition, and shewn a similar disposition to me, you would have been placed in precisely a similar predicament. Your disposition towards me was very different from that which I received from Sturt. He did not come, until I sent for him, and then *haughty* and *insolent*. You came *mildly* and *pleasantly*, saying, "I have heard that you have complaints, I do not judge that they are groundless, put them upon paper, and I will see what I can do to remedy them." Here you said all that you could say. I made a written statement, you sanctioned my complaints, and gave me all the redress I sought. Indeed, more than I sought; for my ideas of right in the character of a prisoner, had never al-



loved me to think of ringing the bell to call some person to open the way into the Gaol Garden when I pleased. It was suggested by Mr. Colson, the Visiting Magistrate, and I instantly acquiesced; but I heard no more of it, until you came into office; and I, of course, considered it too much to expect.

Now, why could not Sturt, or any one of the Sheriffs or Magistrates before you, have done the same thing? Why—because they had not the disposition, because they felt a pleasure in annoying me, in destroying me, as far as they could. They never thought seriously about the thing, until there was something said about violence. They were cold-blooded, bad men, and had not a spark of generous or humane feeling towards an opponent.

I would not have missed a Sheriff of your character in this Gaol, for any consideration. It has given me a complete triumph over the bad men connected with this Gaol, and has exhibited them in the most despicable light. I do not feel imprisonment now, other than in family matters, and shall quit the Gaol, on any future day, near or remote, with the same indifference as I walk into the Garden. I feel, and feel proudly, that there is a very small part of Richard Carlile confined in this Gaol; and whilst Old Eldon is chuckling over my lengthened imprisonment, I am busy at work making his very *woolsack* a seat of thorns.

Again, I thank you, for all the good you have done me, and desire to increase your happiness by divesting your mind of all nonsense about religion and personified Nature.

RICHARD CARLILE.

## BRISTOL SUBSCRIPTION CONTINUED.

	s.	d.
Mr. Bright	2	6
M. B.	2	6
A Peace offering from the Ghost of Vicary Gibbs	2	6
Prymro	2	0
W. P.	2	6
B. F.	10	0
W. W.	2	6
A Friend	2	6
In days of yore, when Priestcraft first essayed To raise the fabled head of Christianity, It invented tales, to make us all afraid Of Devils and the sin of worldly vanity. In modern days, when Volney, Paine, and Carlile By truth, themselves and others have enlightened, These cunning Priests, now detected in their guile, Are from their wits, but not their livings, frightened.		
William Herd	2	6